

***"Behold, the virgin shall conceive and bear a son, and they shall call his name Immanuel (which means, God with us)."***  
**Matthew 1:23 (ESV)**

### Journey Groups

Our Journey groups have officially ended for this year. The Lord worked mightily in the lives of the ladies and gentlemen who participated in our groups. My last group continues to meet on Wednesday evenings because the participants love their small group and love sharing their hearts and struggles. Next week we will be talking about "communication and conflict" because these are topics that everyone is interested in studying deeper to see what the Bible can teach us about those topics.

I will be sitting down this month with my Panamanian friend to work out a schedule for Journey groups next year with her ladies' ministry. The International groups are in April and August (10 weeks each) so we will schedule around those dates.

### Friends, old and new

Every day, the Lord brings people into our lives. Here are some of our new acquaintances and two old friends that we ran into this week. These are people that the Lord calls us to plant seeds in their lives, minister to their needs and to be His hands and compassion in their lives. For those who remember Marta, she just celebrated her 90<sup>th</sup> birthday and contacted us for the first time in years.



## *The Road to Bethlehem*

***“And you were dead in the trespasses and sins in which you once walked, following the course of the world, following the prince of the power of the air, the spirit what is now at work in the sons of disobedience...”***

Ephesians 1: 1-2 (ESV)

This weekend, Mexicans celebrate Day of the Dead. I was considering it as I work on my Christmas newsletter. You must have a “Day of the Dead” moment in your life journey, to realize that you need Bethlehem and Calvary in your life.

Paul tells us that we are dead. We are dead in our sins. We need life. We can’t create life in ourselves or in anyone else. We need someone who can breathe life into us, give us a spiritual transfusion.



Photo credit: Nancy Rach

***“But God, being rich in mercy, because of the great love with which He loved us, even when we were dead in our trespasses, made us alive together with Christ -by grace you have been saved- and raised us up with Him and seated us with Him in the heavenly places in Christ Jesus.”***

Ephesians 2: 4-6 (ESV)



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We need Bethlehem. We need Jesus to become “God with Us.” We need someone to tell us that we are dead, to tell us what true life is and to give it to us.

We need Calvary. We need a blood transfusion. We need to die with Him and be raised to life in Him.

Alive, we need His Spirit to infuse us with His purpose, His plan and His power. We can now live in His Kingdom, here on earth and triage other dead people, taking them to the source of life.

Are you part of the walking dead or have you received new life? Are you one of the dead waiting to bury the dead or are you bringing others to Bethlehem to meet the one who brings dead bones back to life?

**“God with Us:” a manger, a bloody cross, an empty tomb, & the dead live!**

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*“For the Equipping of the Saints and the Strengthening of the Body of Christ” Eph 4:12*